Comberbach. 76.

A

DISPUTE;

CONSISTING OF A

PREFACE

In Favour of

BLANK VERSE;

With an EXPERIMENT of it, in

An ODE,

Upon the BRITISH COUNTRY LIFE,

By ROGER COMBERBACH, Esq; K

An EPISTLE from

Dr. BYROM to Mr. COMBERBACH,

In DEFENCE of RHYME,

AND

Mr. *Comberbach*'s REPLY.

Posthabuit dulci Thyrsis sua seria ludo,
Dum certamen erat Corydon cum Thyrside magnum.
VIRG.

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DISPUTE;

CONSISTING OF A

PREFACE

In Prose of

BLANK VERSE;

With an Epistle of it, in

RAN R,

Upon the BRITISH COUNTRY LIFE,

By Poore Combrach, Esq;

An EPISTLE from

Dr. BYROM to Mr. COMBRIDGE,

In DIFFENCE of RHYME.

As it is

Mr. Combridge's RE PLY.

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PREFACE.

THE author of the following ode designed it only for his private relaxation, but having hastily communicated an imperfect sketch of it, he found himself obliged to revise it, though he is not used to poetry, and if he had a genius for it (which he is conscious he has not) has neither ambition to shine in that way, nor leisure to be correct.

He has been deprived of the pleasure of being much acquainted with English poetry, not only by a life of business, but likewise by his distaste of rhyme, which he never could get over.

But upon reading Mr. Mason's ingenious treatises of poetic and prosaic harmony, it came into his thoughts that the soft Iambic, which the English language easily falls into, might

might have a good effect in lyric measure without rhyme, and being instructed by the same author, that the harmony of Milton's versification consisted in the various disposition of his pauses, he took up this experiment for his amusement.

Rhyme is certainly false taste, and was always avoided by the learned antients.

A constant sameness of measure, and close of periods with the same sound, is extremely tiresome to the ear, like bells rung in the common way, which well rung in changes, would afford an harmonious variety.

It is therefore humbly recommended to men of elevated genius and vacant minds, to rescue the British Muse from her Gothic fetters, which have indeed been much honoured by many famous writers, and by the highest poliſh made easy and fashionable; yet to that incumbrance only it must be imputed, that the best of them have not reached the free sublimity of Shakespear and Milton.

Blank

Blank metre, with varied reſts, is natural harmony; and the writers of it have one advantage even of the antients, in being leſs ſubject to the reſtraint of quantity, and not at all confined to the haſty dactyle; which Dionyſius, and from him Mr. Maſon, have placed among the meaſures which they term ignoble.

It muſt be acknowledged, however, that ſome of Milton's imitators have been too fond of an affected pomp and painful ſwell. His ſubject required the higheſt pitch of ſublime; but in ſubjects that are upon the level with human life, which perhaps are more inſtructive, tho' leſs heroic, the glowing warmth of Virgil ſeems the beſt pattern.

If it ſhould be thought out of character for a lawyer to write verſes, he begs leave to make this apology. After long perſeverance in the ſtudy of his profeſſion (for no one has taken more pains in it) finding that his natural averſion to contention rendered him too opportune to be overborn, he at laſt grew ſick of bar-

bar-practice, and sought to find out some relief in these more quiet studies; but as he has other business that now requires his attention, he is determined, for the future, not to suffer his fondness for these amusements, to encroach in the least upon that duty which he owes to his family.

The

The *Britiſh* Country Life.

An ODE,

Upon the Plan of *Horace*'s ſecond Epode.

HAPPY who far from buſy crowds,
Like man's primeval race,
With his own oxen acres plows
Paternal, clear of debt.
His duty by religious truths
Directed, neither prone
To frantic zeal, nor proud conceit
Of human reaſon, dark
And chearleſs, till by heav'nly grace
Illumin'd. He ſubmits
To ruling pow'rs, in ſtate affairs
Not curious, of himſelf
Serenely lord, from party rage
And tyrant paſſions free.
Him neither wars fierce trumpets rouze,
Nor the ſeas dreadful rage
Diſmays; the noiſy bar he ſhuns,
And waits not on the ſmiles

Of great ones. Either his domain
He marls, or acorns ſows,
Or poplar plants, or uſeful aſh,
Or prunes his wanton vines.
Or elſe in winding vale obſerves
His lowing wanderers,
Or honey ſtows in fictiles clean,
Or ſheers his languid ſheep.
Now underneath ſome aged oak,
Now on th'imprinted graſs
Extended, while the loud caſcade,
Or dulcet ſilvan choir,
Or ſofteſt murmurs of the brook
His eaſy ſlumbers charm.
Approaching ſports in lively dreams
Anticipated, brisk
He riſes; his obſequious bowls
On velvet lawn now haſte,
Now loiter, courted with fond voice
And geſture, to embrace
Th'attractive mark; Great in the liſts
The curate: Spirits wait
On temp'rance: Emulation warm
Fills ev'ry breaſt: Delights
To climes leſs happy, ſcorch'd or chill'd,
Deny'd; the cheary night
With uſeful chat, not without ſong,
O'er ſprightly beer concludes.
And when the wintry welkin low'rs
With gath'ring ſtorms and ſnow,
Strong health and manly ſports his tube
Supplys, far ſlaught'ring. Hark!
The diſtant ſhout at early dawn
And ſprightly horn bid rouze;

Now

Now glows the jovial chaſe: oh bliſs
When hill and valley ring!
Who thus amus'd forgets not ſoon
Love's ſoft diſtreſs? perchance
A chaſte and loving wife keeps neat
His houſe and charming babes,
Her part ſuſtaining (happy ſtate
Of wedlock, often found
Beneath thatch'd roof) laborious, ſwift
And ſunburnt; ſhe betimes
Upriſing, wholeſome breakfaſt ſets
In order; or at ev'n
Her weary ſpouſe expecting, rears
The chearful fire; now drains
Her milky charge, rejoic'd to quit
Their ſwelling load; now crowns
The ſparkling bowl, and freely heaps
With chear unbought the board.

Great Britain, plenteous iſle deſpiſe
The dainty cook, detach'd
By fraudful France, with compound
Feaſt exotic, to conſume
Thy health and treaſure, and corrupt
Thy dreaded virtues, erſt
In bloody battles ſorely prov'd;
Avoid the gaudy bait
Of canker'd luxury, oft gorg'd
At White's by thoughtleſs beaus,
Profuſe of honour and eſtate.
More ſweet and wholeſome far
The barn-door fowl, or Sunday's feaſt
Good beef and dumplin coarſe,
Or apples bak'd in ruſtic paſte

High rais'd with Ceſtrian cheeſe;
But chiefly let the garden, beſt
Of larders, yield me choice
Of chear ſalubrious, roots and pulſe,
And blended ſallads, ſtew'd
With homefed bacon, ſav'ry meal;
Nor the fields native ſtores
Be ſcorn'd; wild endive, ſorrel ſour,
And healing mallow, balm
Of ſurfeits, highly priz'd of old
In venerable ſong.
Thus feaſting, oh! what joy to ſee
My fleecy care revers'd
On floating mirror, as they graze
Th'enamell'd banks! to ſee
My weary'd oxen ill dragg home
The proſtrate plough! to ſee
The merry hall, where ſwarm to ſports
Or tale, my vaſſal train!

Thus the great Lawyer Vernon ſpoke
Retiring (bleſt eſcape
From chanc'ry bar to peaceful groves!)
But at th'approach of term
Returns to London with more ſpeed
Than he forſook it; ſtill
Moils on, and for retirement, ſweet
Retirement, pining dyes.

Doctor

Doctor Byrom's LETTER to Mr. Comberbach,

Occaſion'd by the foregoing *Preface* and *Ode*.

Dear Sir,

THO' friend to rhyme which you explode,
Nevertheleſs I thank you for your ode,
And preface alſo; for my part I chuſe
A plain, familiar, honeſt, rhyming muſe,
And prize her numbers far beyond all blanks,
Excuſe the freedom, and accept the thanks.

Muſing moreover on your printed Sheet,
Reſpect ſuggeſted that it was but meet
In rhymes defence, a rhyme or two to write,
Leſt haply ſilence ſhou'd be deem'd a ſlight;
Not with a captious critical deſign,
That, Sir, is far from any thought of mine;
But in a point of this poetic kind,
You may expect a man to ſpeak his mind,
To own the juſtice of the reaſons, why
You wou'd extirpate rhyme,—or elſe reply.

'Tis your permiſſion then that I invoke
To guard the Muſe from ſuch a fatal Stroak,
Her aid invok'd in any other task;
In this—'tis mine that ſhe is pleas'd to ask;
The poet now muſt lend the Muſe an aid,
And ſave the right of the melodious maid.

You

You ſend me here, an elegance quite new,
A plan from Horace—and well copy'd too,
As far as choſen epithet and pauſe
Harmonious, modulate the lyric clauſe,
As far as native ſcene thro' ev'ry line
Of Roman or of Britiſh bard can ſhine;
As far in ſhort as ev'ry grace but one
Bedecks the theme that either writes upon,
The country life; which Horace in his way,
And you in yours ſo lyricly diſplay.

That one however is a ſpecial grace,
Tho' Roman Horace could not give it place;
His Latin language, fill'd with many more,
Wanted not rhyme to grace its ample ſtore.
But in our own——tho' one ſhould dare to match
With Roman Horace Britiſh C————,
It would be too, too partial to the tongue
To ſay that rhyme was needleſs in the ſong;
Which tho' in pompous buskin verſe declin'd
Is quite eſſential to the odal kind.

Your own attempt——and if another man
Thinks he can better your Horatian plan,
Let him attempt it——you I ſay have ſhewn
That lyric pauſe will hardly do alone.
With all the force of emphaſis, and choice
Of word and ſtop, to pre-engage the voice;
Still they who read, and they who hear it read,
Hang in ſuſpence——if to be ſung or ſaid:
Some that I ſhew'd it to, intent to read,
Have well begun, but cou'd not well proceed;
Well they begun——but as they went along
They found their prejudice to rhyme too ſtrong,

Each

Each other grace, when that did not appear,
Diſpleas'd the long habituated ear;
All vary'd reſts, and all deſcriptions pat
Cou'd not compenſate for the want of that.

With prefatory page to introduce
The new endeavour to correct old uſe;
I doubt you cannot Britiſhly exempt
Lyrics from rhyme——tho' welcome the attempt.
To old improvements one may give their due,
Yet like a genius that but hints at new;
In verſe or proſe to hint one now a-days
I count a matter of no ſervile praiſe,
Tho' for the reaſons that you urge in print
I cannot yield to your ingenious hint.

The leading maxim which is here embrac'd,
To wit——that rhyme is certainly falſe taſte,
Is one, to which if you appeal to me;
I cannot yet by any means agree.
To this reſerving all the due reſpect
For better information, I object.

Rhyme is falſe taſte—and then you add beſide——
And what the learned antients all avoid.
What learned antients? let me ask what all
Into this taſte were ſo afraid to fall?
For as to thoſe of Greek and Roman ſtem
Avoiding rhyme——why rhyme avoided them.
Nature of language upon rhyming feet
Forbad the two antagoniſts to meet.
This is no more a reaſon to defame
Our rhymes in Engliſh, than for us to blame

The

The ſeveral ideoms which thoſe tongues have got,
And we avoid——that is, we have them not.

Sameneſs of meaſure conſtantly purſued,
And cloſe of periods, that ſtill conclude
With the ſame ſound, is irkſome to the ear,
This is the reaſon next aſſerted here.
But are not meaſures in our common verſe,
The very ſame which you your ſelf rehearſe.
The ſoft Iambic——in your phraſe——and theſe
The Engliſh language falls into with eaſe.
Give then to meaſure, whilſt you take the ſame,
It's eaſy, natural, unirkſome claim;
Make fair appeal——nor guiltleſs rhyme aſſault
For meaſur'd ſameneſs of Iambic fault,
And then let ears decide this ſingle doubt,
Are lyrics irkſome with them——or without?

With them you think——blank metre far excel
And bring a plain compariſon from bells.
Rhymes are extremely irkſome——ſo you ſay,
As bells are irkſome rung the common way,
From which in changes if the ringers ring
Variety and harmony would ſpring.

Now bells when rung in changes, if you will,
May ſhew in ringers a ſuperior skill,
But for the muſic of their various change
Give me the ſimple tuneful octave range,
Of ſteepled ſounds the plain harmonious part,
The reſt is all but janglement of art,
Leſs apt, as hearers I have heard complain,
To pleaſe an ear, than to diſturb a brain;

Of

Of this alluſion one may then admit,
And rhyme not ſuffer I conceive a-bit.

Why recommend, for reaſons of this kind,
To men of genius and of vacant mind
To baniſh rhymes in general—to decree
The Britiſh Muſe from Gothic fetters free?

Theſe Gothic fetters all the Muſes ſeek
In all the tongues, but Latin and but Greek,
Where verſe excels, becauſe they both are bleſt,
With fetters more than any of the reſt;
Can yield to more and ſtricter rules, in fine,
That grace and ſtrengthen the poetic line.
Our too-neglected language has too few,
Yet as if more were in it than enoo
You baniſh rhyme—bid vacant minds provide
To lay its chief prerogative aſide;
That one peculiar beauty you decry,
Which modern Muſes are diſtinguiſh'd by.

Poets, for their encouragement, you paint
Leſs ſubject now to quantity's reſtraint,
Than were the antients—to be thus unty'd,
Is one advantage on the modern ſide.

Whereas in all poetical reſpect,
This one advantage, is one great defect,
One ſource of ruin to the minor clan,
Who think verſe good verſe, when they words can ſcan,
By this advantage they run hobling on,
Yea men of ſenſe ſometimes, like Doctor Donne;
With woeful proof what benefit is gain'd,
By being leſs to quantity reſtrain'd:

Of all reſtraints the juſteſt——heretofore
Leſs ty'd the modern bards, at preſent more,
More ev'ry harſher freedom they coerce,
And conſequently write much better verſe;
'Tis true they don't in Greek and Latin ſort,
Fix by unvary'd rules, the long and ſhort
Of ſyllables——but a judicious bard
Pays to their quantities the ſame regard,
In length and brevity exact and clear,
He wants no precepts while he has an ear;
Wants no advantage, having no complaint
Of being ſubject to the ſame reſtraint;
Which they who are not ſubject to, I doubt,
For Muſe and metre, will appear too ſtout;
What poet then wou'd any rhyme diſmiſs,
For ſuch a blank advantage, Sir, as this.

You add another——not at all confin'd
To haſty dactyle of ignoble kind——
So Dionyſius and ſo Maſon term
Poor Dactyle's meaſure, and ſo you confirm.

Severe enough——imagine he that lifts
Wherein its ignobility conſiſts;
What I would ask is, why of antient folks
Impoſe on us the freedoms or the yokes?
Of antient folks, whoſe language and its pow'rs,
Muſt have ſo oft a different turn from ours.
'Tis our own language, Sir, when underſtood,
That tells what freedom, what reſtraint, is good.
'Tis Maſon haſt ignobly to aſperſe
The Britiſh Muſe, who in her dactyle verſe
Subjects and meaſures properly apply'd,
Exerts a grace to Greece and Rome deny'd,

Or

Or inattentive he, or injudicious,
To blame her dactyle from his Dionyſius,
Or ſay——of metre that you pleaſe prefer,
What Dionyſius had to do with her?
He knew her not——and 'tis a learned whim
To think that ſhe knew any thing of him,
Or if ſhe did——that ſhe wou'd go to ſeek
The rules for Engliſh, that he wrote in Greek.
Young bards that write moſt promiſingly well,
And might in native ſenſe and ſound excel,
Are oft by antient pedantry, at laſt,
Loſt in the blank of tragical bombaſt:
Who wou'd not wiſh that they might take in time
The grand preſervative——the Britiſh rhyme?
Not to forbid excurſion, ſuch as this
Which you preſent, nor takes the Muſe amiſs;
But when you chain her lyrics to your laws,
Then ſhe looks blank, and there ſhe makes a pauſe;
As well ſhe may——if all her ſtock you veſt,
In blank Iambic, and its vary'd reſt:
One edict further if your preface goes,
Adieu to poetry, and all is proſe;
Nor Goth nor Vandal has the Muſe undone,
But you, alas! her rhyme-diſtaſting Son.

By fetters as you call them, Goths deſign'd
Not to enſlave, but to relieve the mind,
By due recurrence of a kindred ſound,
To give their verſe its true harmonious bound,
Or in their ſacred or hiſtoric rhymes,
Beſt to record the worth of antient times,
Beſt to inſtruct and edify the throng,
Or chear their hearts with memorable ſong;

Tho' rough their ſpeech, and its improvement ſmall,
It gave them rhymes, and made amends for all.

What language, Sir, in European ſphere,
Does not this Gothic force of ſound revere?
What poet is there whom this critic haſt,
Does not condemn for certainly falſe taſte?
Not that I plead preſcription — but excuſe
For not conſenting to deſtroy its uſe;
Secure of candour in you to diſpenſe,
With what occurs in honeſt rhymes defence.
The vacant minds that come into your views,
And think to reſcue, will but rob the Muſe,
If what you call a faſhionable chain
Is no incumbrance, as you here maintain,
But an advantage, which the Muſe muſt teach,
A vary'd reſt that antients could not reach.

By your account of rhyme one wou'd ſuppoſe,
That the ſame ſound all periods muſt cloſe,
This may be irkſome — but 'tis not the caſe,
For vary'd rhyme affords a vary'd grace;
No need of ſameneſs to recur ſo oft,
As does the pauſe of your Iambick-ſoft,
Which tho' you ring in artful changes thro'
The bells for lyric meaſures are too few,
Tho' juſtly quite, and pauſingly belyr'd,
The rhyme is wanting, and the ear is tir'd,
Tho' ty'd to quantity — as if it ſaw
No diſpenſation for ſo juſt a law.

Your country life will ſuffer no neglect
But that of rhyme — yet what is the effect?

Why

Why, that without it, all the arts beſide,
Cannot reſiſt the torrent of the tide;
Deſcriptive beauties that with Horace vie
In Britiſh lyrics, want the Britiſh tie;
All are diſpers'd without this tie acroſs,
And ev'ry ſcatter'd beauty mourns its loſs.

A loſs which if you think it worth your care
A skill like your's can eaſily repair;
Diſtaſte of rhyme, if you can once get o'er,
And then retract——to verſify no more——
Can leave to plays and fictions blank ſublime,
And take your Virgils glowing warmth and rhyme.

If ſtill averſe conſider, Sir, how hard
From rhyme it is to wean a rhyming bard,
The danger too that partly you foretel
Of an affected pomp and painful ſwell;
Too plain at preſent, and too likely lot
Of future blank attempters——but if not,
Who will aſſiſt the poor Goth-fetter'd Muſe,
If you yourſelf cry reſcue——and refuſe?
Who will ſupport your ſentiment if true,
Or give a fairer ſample than you do?
Or true or falſe, whatever one may ſay,
Fairly propoſed, it ought to have fair play.
One thing, in fine, we both of us may think
Let rhyme, if reaſon be againſt it ſink;
But if on reaſon rhyme beſtows a grace,
Flouriſh the verſe that gives them both a place.

Thus, Sir, with freedom and without diſguiſe,
I ſpeak my ſimple notions as they riſe,

Leſt

Leſs willing to object againſt your plan,
Than to receive conviction, if I can,
But when a friend inquires, I think it juſt
To play the critic, and fulfil the truſt;
And then for fear of being prepoſſeſt,
I leave the judgment to my friend's own breaſt.

P. S.

Since this as your's induced me on the book,
Of antient Horace to beſtow a look,
Led like a packhorſe by preceding chimes
To tread the tract, the beaten tract of rhymes,
I pick'd up ſuch as lay upon the road,
To look the gen'ral topics of his ode,
To pleaſe the Muſe, while in her rhyming cue,
Not with intent to vie with him or you,
For you may find much greater fault in this,
Than I in your's——however, here it is.

I.

Happy the mortal who can now,
Like men of antient ſet
With his own oxen acres plow
Paternal clear of Debt.

II.

He neither hears the trump of war,
Nor dreads the raging main,
The clamours of the noiſy bar,
Nor haughty Cit's diſdain.

Shoots

III.

Shoots of his own luxuriant vine
With poplars pleas'd to wed,
Uſeleſs to lop, or if they pine,
Plant happier in their ſtead.

IV.

To view his lowing herds that roam
Around the valley deep,
To preſs the honey from the comb,
Or ſheer his languid ſheep.

V.

Now ſtretch'd ſome aged oak beſide,
Now on th'imprinted graſs,
While from the rocks the waters glide,
He hears the feather'd claſs.

VI.

Woods eccho ſtill their plaintive ſong,
Brooks murmur thro' the fields,
To gentle ſlumbers laid along,
The happy ruſtic yields.

VII.

Soon as th'autumnal year prepares
The weathers wintry ſtore,
With many a dog to deſtin'd ſnares
He drives the briſtly boar.

VIII.

Or net ſuſpends on ſlender poles
To catch delightful game,
The tim'rous hare or bird that proles
Voracious, wild, or tame.

IX.

While thus amus'd, and thus employ'd,
Who is there that wou'd heed,
Would all the miſchiefs dire abide
That love is wont to breed?

X.

Or if a chaſte endearing wife
His rural bliſs ſhall ſhare,
She chears the neat domeſtic life,
Sweet prattling babes her care.

XI.

With ſmoth'ring warmth prepared to burn
The dry old log ſhe lays,
And if her weary ſpouſe return,
Revives the focal blaze.

XII.

Of folded flocks from dales and hills,
The milky treaſure ſtor'd,
Freſh clean brew'd wine ſhe draws, and fills
With chear unbought, the board.

And here——the Muſe retiring bid me note,
The rural epode ends that Horace wrote;
This, Sir, to me, I muſt confeſs was new,
Strange at firſt thought, but upon ſecond true;
Non me Lucrina juverint conchilia,
Looks of his Muſe ſo like another *filia*;
That if you turn to Horace, you may find
Sufficient reaſons to be of my mind.

Another verſe, tho' both for meaſure twins,
On *fœnerator Alphius* begins;
Beatus ille had compleated quite,
The rural day's deſcription with its night;
Too late, too botching, on a fair ſurvey,
The forc'd and ſtiff tranſition to ——*non me.*
Where Horace paints an uſurer grown warm,
About his own, and not another's farm.
His *oves*, *boves*, *vernæ*, *lares*, all
Beſpeak the landlord at his country-hall;
Struck with a ſudden ſenſe of homely bliſs,
That avarice ſoon taught him to diſmiſs.

Another topic and another ſtile
Begins your own——Great Britain, plenteous iſle—
Juſt imitator, fairly you forbore
To force coherence with what went before;
My fleecy care, as rightly you explain,
My weary'd oxen——and my vaſſal train,
Give a diſtinctive hint, from whence to date
The ſpeech relating to the miſer's fate.

More likely then that to a diff'rent ſong
Beatus ille and *non me* belong.

In one the poet on deſcription bent,
The country life exhauſted his intent,
A fair ſufficient and well-finiſh'd theme,
Take it without the *fœnerator ſeam*;
Another ſubject was the mony'd ſquire,
When gentle ſatyr touch'd the poet's lyre,
Play'd off a ſpeech more ſuitably conciſe,
To a ſhort fruitleſs interval of vice.

And yet in length——for here one may forebode
Objection——equal to the following ode;
Same meaſure too; or if inſiſted on,
Some other reaſons why the ode is one;
They beſt account for the miſtake, who threw
Into one ode, what Horace meant for two.

Brief——to the miſer his *non me* award,
His own *beatus ille* to the bard.

Mr. COMBER-

Mr. COMBERBACH's REPLY to Dr. BYROM.

Majora canamus. VIRG.

THE long enduring ſlave may ſometime catch
Relief, and reſting on his oar, awhile
Forget his chain, with tranſient proſpect bleſt
Of rural ſcene, or dome magnific. Thus,
My Colin, your obliged friend, grown old
In entries and records, once more preſumes,
Unpractic'd, to explore the Muſes haunts,
Clear ſpring, or ſhady grove, or ſunny hill,
Or Night's ſoft landskit, where the full-orb'd moon,
(How ſweetly!) ſlumbers o'er the ſplendid banks,
Of holy Dee, and trembles in her ſtream.
Once more, at thy requeſt, he fondly tunes
His anxious mind, improvident of fame.

Harmonious Shepherd, ſuch thy verſe to me
As cooling draught in ſultry ſolſtice, ſuch
As zephyrs wafted over violet banks,
Diſpenſing and receiving incenſe ſweet.
In early life admir'd, for ſprightly tale
And eaſy ſonnet; Silver Irwell heard
Thy ſweet complaining, all a ſummer's day,
Of abſent fair, ev'n Britain's hardy ſons
Embrac'd the ſoft infection; now mature,
What honours on her fav'rite ſhall the Muſe
Confer? this charming pipe; here take it, erſt
By Syracuſian Shepherd tun'd, and him
Whoſe pow'rful numbers bent the liſt'ning oaks

On Mantuan paſtures; Third poſſeſſor Thou.
If haply bold Theorbo ſhou'd employ
Thy glowing skill; behold, where waits thy call
Urania, Lutaniſt celeſtial, ſhe
To Mantuan ſeer, thy great example, firſt
Inſtruction deign'd, when rais'd by pow'rs divine
From humble fields, he drew empyreal air
Aſtoniſh'd, big with raptures, not his own.

No wonder, thus illumin'd, he foretold
Approaching bliſs, bright progeny of Jove,
Effulgence of th'eternal eſſence, full
Of grace and truth, celeſtial viſitant
On earth, to lead us in the paths of peace
And juſtice, and reſtore the golden age.

Great Virgil thus: ſuch Themes, my learned Friend,
Would bear thy ſprightful Pegaſus aloft,
To mix with ſpheral Comfort, far above
Fond flight of fabled boy, who, falling, found
A watry tomb. Like his my feeble wing
Unhallow'd fails me, hackney'd and impair'd
In noiſy crowds, and clogg'd with wordly cares.

Hide me, ye Muſes, in ſweet Marford's grove,
Or cover me with humble cot, ſerene
And vacant, there to cheriſh and let grow
My ruffled plumes; thus ſtrengthen'd, thus enlarg'd,
To grace the copious harp with vary'd pauſe
Be mine, Miltonic art, by Gothic chime
Unfetter'd, nature's lofty voice, beſt tun'd
To ſacred theme, and ſacred theme to ſong.

From that all-hallow'd time, when choral hoſt
Angelic, on the conſecrated hills
Of Bethlem, ſung to ſimple ſhepherd folk
Glad tydings, unto you this day is born
A ſaviour, Chriſt the lord; to God on high
Be glory, peace on earth, good will tow'rds men;
From that all-hallow'd time, the Muſes left
Parnaſſus, Delphic and Dodonian groves
Grew ſilent, Pan himſelf forſook the fields.

Thee, Pan, enamour'd Mantinea mourn'd,
Thee ſoft Cyllene; Pilot Thamus heard
The lamentable dirge. Him ſailing croſs
Th'Ægean, while becalm'd, a mighty voice
Thrice hail'd; and thrice Euboeas concave creeks
Rebellow'd, Thamus. Silent horror ſtruck
The boiſt'rous crew, 'till Thamus, ſore aghaſt,
Aſſuming ill-feign'd courage, ſpoke; who calls
On Thamus? ſpeed thee, Thamus, ſaid the ſpright,
To ſtill Mycenæ, loudly there proclaim
This mournful tale, the great God Pan is dead.
Straight to Mycenæ driv'n by furious winds,
Which there ſubſided, Thamus ſtraight proclaims
The mournful tale, the great God Pan is dead.
Straight the hoarſe ſhore of antient Pelops rings
With diſmal groans; Arcadian ſhepherds take
The bounding ſound, the great God Pan is dead.
By Pan forſaken, who ſhall now inſpire
Enchanting ſong? who fill the ſacred pipe?
Pan firſt permitted not melodious reeds
Want uſe, Pan lov'd the ſhepherd and his flock.

Fond ſhepherds, ceaſe to mourn for fancy'd Pan.
Behold th'almighty lord of heav'n and earth

Your

Your ſhepherd comes, with healing in his wings
He comes. Hark! how th'angelic choir reſound
His gracious advent; join them pipe and harp,
Lute, trumpet loud, and organ of deep ſtop,
Each ſtring and golden wire, with dulcet voice,
To celebrate his praiſe in grateful hymns,
And lift the Muſes to their native heav'n.

FINIS.

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